

WILLI LANG Interview
by Bruce Pierini
Sacramento Ethnic Communities Survey Project
January 6, 1984
Tape #1

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
0:00	Introduction
0:36	Born March 19, 1933 in D�delsheim in Hessen (near the agricultural area around Frankfurt.
1:24	Memories of World War II: bombing raids from 1943-44.
3:43	Description of typical day of bombing.
5:45	March 19, 1945 bombing of Hanau. The city of Hanau was almost completely destroyed during this two-hour period and over 40,000 people died.
8:00	Hanau was almost completely rebuilt.
8:20	Doesn't remember a great deal of anti-Jewish feeling because he was just a boy. Recalls missing his Jewish boyhood friend and his family. Describes "The Crystal Night" of anti-Jewish terror.
10:38	His parents were afraid to speak out against Jewish persecution.
11:08	Anti-Semitism incident where eggs were smashed.
12:20	Describes the Third Reich's Polish propaganda campaign.
14:49	Had no predominant feelings about Americans as the enemy because they didn't get into the war until later.
15:56	First encounter with an American as an eleven-year-old boy. First time he saw a black person in person.
18:50	During the war he remembers hunger. Meat was only eaten on Sunday. Eggs were very rare. They did have much milk because the government could not easily control its production.

WILLI LANG Interview
Index - page 2

- 20:52 Minimalizes the long-term effects of these wartime memories on his psyche.
- 21:23 Feelings of being glad when the war was over. He feels Germans genuinely welcomed the Americans.
- 23:10 Describes return of a Jewish man to his German town after the war and as an American soldier.
- 24:43 Reasons for coming to Sacramento in April, 1965.
- 28:00 His arrangements to emigrate to here.
- 28:30 He worked for Firestone Company in Sacramento for eleven years. He got the job through a German man who already worked here.
- 29:22 Met German people in the grocery stores and in German butcher shops.
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- 1:50 Their struggles when he and his wife first got to Sacramento. They received a great deal of help with furnishing their home.
- 4:16 Description of German butcher stores they found in Sacramento in March 1965: Kohler's Pork Store on Fulton and K and Z Pork Store on J Street.
- 5:30 Difference he found in public transportation between here and Germany.
- 6:00 He found a lot of Germans here, many through the Order of the Hermann Sons.
- 6:30 Description of learning English from television and newspapers. Remembers seeing television series "Combat" and finding it unrealistic in ways.

WILLI LANG Interview
Index - page 3

- 10:00 No feelings of having been discriminated against as a German.
- 10:36 He and his family moved to Rogers, Arkansas in 1972 to find work.
- 11:38 No German community in Rogers except for seven German people. They missed their friends and the more pleasant weather in Sacramento.
- 13:27 Wife's reactions to tornado sirens.
- 14:13 His wife Dorit became the Turn Verein Hausmeisterin here in Sacramento in 1978.
- 14:48 Explains Hausmeister job.
- 16:00 Reasons for Willi becoming Hausmeister.
- 18:35 Previous custodians hadn't always worked out at the Turn Verein.
- 20:38 Drawbacks to being a Turn Verein Hausmeister.
- 21:00 Germans who come here often want to see the Turn Verein.
- 22:00 Description of the social and cultural activities at the Turn Verein: The 1983 Celebration of the Tri-centennial of German Immigration to America, Oktoberfest, Bachbierfest and Fasching.
- 25:00 Lists other clubs at the Turn Verein: The Danish, Swiss and Polish Clubs.
- 25:38 German frequently spoken at the Turn Verein.
- 26:39 There are presently 165 members of the Turn Verein. Describes club membership.
- 29:08 The Order of the Hermann Sons helps new immigrants get settled but few people come for this help.
- 30:49 END Of Tape #1.

WILLI LANG Interview
January 6, 1984
Tape # 2

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0:25 Further description of German-Americans at the Turn Verein Club.

1:03 Only men can belong to the Turn Verein proper but women can join an auxilliary.

2:30 Some women have complained about this practice.

2:60 Gemütlichkeit is present often at the Turn Verein.

5:30 Describes present lack of cohesion in the German community.

6:48 Speculates on why many German-Americans are not interested in joining.

8:03 There is a small core group of twenty to twenty-five people who are active in many club committees.

9:30 Turn Verein has helped him maintain his German identity.

10:29 Categorizes himself as a German-American.

10:55 Incident in the supermarket where other Germans did not want to speak German with Willi and his wife Dorit.

13:00 His children's education.

13:25 Does not feel homesick.

14:00 Future plans.

15:00 Discussion of retirement and being over fifty years old.

17:00 Willi is very grateful to America for all the help he received when settling here. He feels very positive about the help he received from the American people when he began his life and his family's life here.

17:30 END OF INTERVIEW